

## ► **SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY STANDARDS**

Develop the habit of checking your speed and slowing down near any school at all hours. Traffic congestion at school pick-up and drop-off times increases confusion in parking lots and adjacent streets. Plan a route that avoids school zones when you can. Mixing speeding or distracted driving with child pedestrians and bicyclists is dangerous because children are difficult to see due to their size and tendency toward unpredictable behavior.

Children walking or bicycling to school often ignore or don't understand traffic control so they cross streets and parking lots wherever it is convenient. They often do not check for an appropriate gap or for the right of way when crossing streets. Children need time to develop the ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. Young children may think that a car is able to stop when in fact it can't. Also, children may think that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them.

- Slow down for school zones
- School zone speed limits may be as low as 15 mph (MCA 61-8-310)
- Watch out for children near schools and parks day and night
- Stop and STAY stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks and at intersections

### ■ **SCHOOL ZONE**

School zone means an area near a school beginning at the school's front door, encompassing the campus and school property, and including the streets directly adjacent to the school property and for as many blocks surrounding the school as determined by the local authority establishing a special speed limit. See MCA 61-1-101(68).

### ■ **SCHOOL CROSSINGS**

Drivers must **always** yield to pedestrians in school crosswalks. There may or may not be school crossing guards to assist with safe pedestrian crossing. Drivers should stop before crosswalks so other drivers can also see pedestrians.

Drivers can't drive through a column of school children crossing a roadway, or past a school crossing guard while the crossing guard is directing the movement of children across a roadway and while the crossing guard is holding an official sign in the stop position. See MCA 61-8-502.

### ■ **SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT**

School speed limit signs indicate posted speeds or where reduced speeds have been authorized by local authorities. Watch for signs, markings, and/or flashing lights as indicators of speed limit changes. See MCA 61-8-310(1)(d).

### ■ **PARKING AND STOPPING**

Signs may be used to prevent parked or waiting vehicles from blocking travel lanes and views for both drivers and pedestrians, keep school bus loading zones clear, and increase visibility of school zones.

### ■ **FINES DOUBLED IN SCHOOL ZONES**

Montana law enforces a strict policy on speed violations in or near school zones. Fines are doubled in all school zones throughout Montana.